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THE HOBSON SITE: A FORT ANCIENT COMPONENT NEAR MIDDLEPORT, MEIGS COUNTY, OHIO

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ABSTRACT

Salvage archeology at the Hobson Site (33Ms-2) on the Ohio River 1½ miles downstream from Middleport, Meigs County, Ohio, has revealed an important Fort Ancient component. On the basis of the dominant pottery types, the component is assigned to the Feurt Phase. It is suggested that the site represents the early Feurt Phase, and the age of the site is estimated as approximately 1100-1200 A.D. Minor traces of Archaic, Woodland, and later Late Prehistoric components were also noted.

INTRODUCTION

The Hobson Site (33Ms-2) located on the west bank of the Ohio River, 1½ miles downstream from Middleport, Meigs County, Ohio, was partly and hurriedly excavated in August, 1966. Mr. George Orahood of Prospect, Ohio, the construction engineer at the site, notified the author on the day that ground was broken. The following three days were spent by the author and another Ohio University student, Mr. Tim Watkins, in salvaging as much material as possible. The site is now the location of the new Middleport sewage treatment plant. It is regrettable that, although the plant had been in the planning stage for over ten years, we did not learn of the existence of the archeological site until after construction had started. On the other hand, it is fortunate that Mr. Orahood was interested in the site and notified both the Ohio Historical Society and Ohio University. In addition to Mr. Orahood, acknowledgment should be made to Mr. Emmett Conway of the Institute for Regional Development, Athens, Ohio, Mr. Ross Goodwin and Mr. Watkins, who were of help in the salvage operation, and to Mr. Conway, who photographed the burial found at the site.

LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies on the northern bank of Storys Run at the confluence of that stream with the Ohio River, 1½ miles downstream from Middleport, Ohio, and 1¼ miles upstream from Lakin, West Virginia, at an elevation of approximately 570 feet above sea level. The bluff on which the site is located lies about 25 feet above the present normal pool elevation of the Ohio River. The land is now owned by the city of Middleport, and the site name is taken from Hobson Junction, slightly less than half a mile upstream, on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

Concentrated occupation occurred over an area of at least two acres, the heaviest midden occurring near the edge of the river bluff. Midden material averaged less than a foot in thickness, thinning rapidly to the north and east until, on the periphery of the site, only a few flint chips, potsherds, bone fragments, and clam shells were seen, the latter being the most conspicuous in the freshly exposed cuts made by the earth-moving equipment. Some areas of fire-burned subsoil were found near the river bank and clam shells were so abundant in the same area as to constitute a veritable shell midden. The only other features encountered were the dozen or so burials in the cemetery located at the northeast edge of the midden area.

Excavation technique, if it can be called that, consisted largely of surface collecting behind the earth-moving equipment as the machinery passed back and forth over the site. When the equipment was not in operation, portions of the midden were scraped down to the subsoil with mattocks. It was in this manner that the one complete burial excavated was first found, although it was removed with more care than we were able to give to excavation of the rest of the site.

Flint and Stone Material

Pl. 1

Relatively little chippage was recovered from the site, partly because in our haste it was thought preferable to concentrate on the bone, shell, and pottery refuse material. Of the 274 chips saved, 96 percent represented pebble chert collected from the river gravel. The bulk of this river chert is composed of Devonian and Pennsylvanian material, at least a third of it being dense black flint from

the Upper Mercer and Kanawha members. With the exception of a few chips of Flint Ridge (Vanport) flint, none of the remaining chippage could be identified.

Flint artifacts from the site include 13 triangular points of pebble chert which fall into three relatively distinct types: large, crude, possibly unfinished points (5), small, thin, well-made points with convex bases and concave sides (7), and small, thin points with straight sides and a straight base (1). Though admittedly a small sample, the predominance of the convex base in association with concave sides which frequently are produced to form basal ears may prove to be a temporally distinct point type. It is a distinct minority type on Feurt Phase Fort Ancient components in the Hocking Valley.

There are also three large blanks of river pebble chert, two broken elongate points (one of Brush Creek chert and the other of Kanawha flint), a broken, stemmed Adena point of an unidentified flint, and a side-notched Archaic point of Flint Ridge flint. The base of this last point is either fractured or else represents the original surface of the striking platform; the lower portions of the notches are moderately ground. A small, crude end-scraper on a blade, two long blade-like spalls with retouch flaking along a portion of one end, and four unidentifiable fragments of points complete the list of worked flint material.

The remaining stone artifacts consist of a small hematite celt and a roughly chipped basalt chopper. A single fragment of unworked cannel coal was also found.

Worked Bone Material

Pl. 2

Bone artifacts were relatively uncommon at the site and consisted mainly of awls and bone beads. There are two bird-bone splinter awls, a deer-ulna awl, and the tip of a second deer-ulna awl. Bird bone was utilized for beads, two of which were recovered; there is also a fragmentary bead made from the radius of a rabbit. Other bone artifacts are a small piece of a turtleshell cup, part of a bone beamer, and a small, spatulate object apparently made from a deer longbone.

Pottery

Pl. 3, 4

The potsherds collected at the Hobson Site may be divided into five distinct types based on differences in surface finish, temper, and rim decoration. Two of these types, however, are very poorly represented.

Type 1: Limestone-tempered, cordmarked ware represented by 25 body sherds and one rim sherd. Average thickness of ten body sherds ranging from 4.6 mm to 8.2 mm is 6.6 mm. Temper fragments measure up to 10 mm in diameter. The solitary rim sherd has a slightly everted, cordmarked lip with the cordmarking vertical on the rim area. Most of the sherds contain minor amounts of sand, presumably accidental inclusions in the paste.

This type, as represented in the collection, cannot be distinguished from the late Middle Woodland Watson Ware of the Upper Ohio Valley nor from the Late Woodland Peters Cordmarked Ware from the Scioto and Hocking Valley drainages.

Type 2: Shell-tempered, cordmarked ware represented by 30 body sherds and a single rim sherd. Average thickness of ten sherds ranging from 4.7 mm to 9.1 mm is 6.6 mm. The rim sherd is strongly everted, the rim forming an angle with the body of approximately 145°. Cordmarking is vertical at the rim, the lower half of which is decorated with crudely incised vertical lunules; the upper half of the rim has the cordmarking obliterated by horizontal brushing or combing. Insofar as is known, this decorated sherd is unique. There is certainly no reason to assign it to Fort Ancient, although the body sherds are indistinguishable from Fox Farm Cordmarked.

Type 3: Fox Farm Salt Pan: A single shell-tempered sherd apparently comes from a Fox Farm salt pan. Although the lip is missing, the curvature of the sherd makes such an assignment likely. Depth of the pan is estimated as having been about 4 cm.

Type 4: Shell-tempered, plain vessels with plain rims. This type is represented by 26 rim sherds which vary considerably in rim profile; 21 are nearly vertical with rounded (12), flattened (6), or incised (3) lips. Three sherds, possibly from the same vessel, have sharply everted, slightly thickened rims 1 to 2 cm wide. Two sherds have convex rims 35 to 40 mm wide, separated from the body of the vessel by a rather abrupt flexure. Although those sherds with sharply everted rims are indistinguishable from Madisonville

Plain rim sherds, the affinities of the bulk of the plain rim sherds lie with Griffin's Feurt Focus.

Type 5: Decorated rims which are considered to be variants of the plain shell-tempered ware (Type 4). The 791 plain, shell-tempered body sherds from the site cannot, of course, be separated into the two rim types. Among the decorated rims there are seven small sherds with multilinear incising and four small sherds with cord-wrapped stick impressed punctates, sherds too small for one to form an idea of the entire pattern. Sixteen sherds represent vessels which had horizontal multiple incising around the rim; the incised lines vary from four to six in number and from 1.9 mm to 3.3 mm in width. The incised lines vary from closely spaced (2.5 mm apart) to 15 mm apart. The incising is generally crude and the lines are only roughly parallel. In four instances there is an additional incised design element below the horizontal banding: alternating triangles filled with oblique incised lines, a crude, fine-lined rectilinear guilloche, and two sherds on which the incised pattern cannot be determined. Three rim sherds have the opposed chevron design considered typical of the Feurt Phase (Murphy, *ms.*).

A single sherd combines cord-wrapped stick punctates as a rim border and a rim decorated with oblique incised lines. The only other known occurrence of this motif is a sherd of Chillicothe Brushed from the McGraw Site (Prufer, *et al.*, 1965, p. 55), though it would be rash to postulate any direct relationship between the two sites.

Finally, there are ten strap handles or fragments of handles and two lug handles. One of the lugs is a mammiform lug detached from the vessel; the other is simply a small horizontal shelf or ridge attached to the lip. The strap handles are crudely made, large, with parallel sides. Two are punctate and have a castellated lip. One of these has a row of punctates at the base of the rim, as is the case with a third handle, which does not have castellations. Another strap handle occurs with a similar raised rim area rather than castellations, but it does not have punctates at the base of the rim. The remaining handles are fragmentary or detached from the vessels. Included in the count are two broken castellations which do not belong to any of the rims collected.

POTTERY SUMMARY

The strap handles recovered from the site certainly do not resemble Madisonville or "Clover Complex" material. Nor does the material strongly resemble Monongahela wares. It seems to fit best the known characteristics of the type Feurt Plain. The large amount of incised rim sherds would also suggest a relationship with the Feurt Phase, especially when one considers the prevalence of the opposed-chevron motif. The dominance at the site of smooth-surfaced shell-tempered sherds is an even more striking similarity between the Hobson Site and Feurt Phase components in the Hocking Valley.

At variance with our present knowledge of Feurt ware is the common use of horizontal incised motives at the Hobson Site. Such sherds are indistinguishable from sherds labelled Monongahela Incised from the Speidel Site, Ohio County, West Virginia (Mayer-Oakes, 1954, fig. 13, 14). However, it is interesting to note that Griffin (1943, pl. xx, fig. 1) illustrates an "atypical" Baum sherd with horizontal incising from the Feurt Site. A horizontal rim motif is also known from the McCune Site, Athens, Ohio, a Feurt component (Murphy, *ms.*). Even more significant is the dominance of horizontal incising at the Blain Site, a Baum-like component currently under study by Dr. Olaf Prufer, and its presence on shell-tempered ware from Cole Complex sites excavated by R. S. Baby.

It is tempting to suggest that horizontal incising is a carry-over from the Baum Phase into the early Feurt Phase, but such an hypothesis would certainly be premature. Unfortunately, because of the hurried manner in which the Hobson Site was excavated, it is a moot point whether one or two Late Prehistoric components are represented and, if two, whether or not they are contemporaneous. Until a definite Feurt site is discovered at which horizontal incising is a common decorative element, the best course to follow is to assign tentatively the incised Hobson sherds to Feurt Incised.

Historic Material

Pl. 2

Numerous fragments of glass and china were noted at the site, although unfortunately none of the china ware was saved. The only recognizable metal objects found were a penknife and an unidentifiable fragment of cast iron. The foundations of an old farm-

house lay immediately to the northeast of the site, and the historic items may best be ascribed to that source.

The presence of an historic Delaware village site in this immediate area should be noted, although it is not thought to have been located at the Hobson Site. Lewis Evans' 1755 map locates "Kishkeminetas old T." on the north side of the Ohio River, slightly less than half way between "The big Bent" and the Kanawha River. Hanna (1911, v. 2, p. 142) locates Kiskiminetas' Town eight miles above the mouth of the Kanawha, which would place it in the vicinity of the town of Cheshire, 2½ miles downstream from the Hobson Site. The limited time available did not permit a general survey of the area, but it is believed that such a survey would discover the exact location of Kiskiminetas' Old Town.

Burials

Pl. 5, 6

The cemetery associated with this village site lay immediately to the northeast of the midden deposit, possibly extending even as far as the farmhouse mentioned above. At least nine burials were noted, scattered over an area of about an acre, between the major area of occupation and the foundations of the farm house. The burials were uncovered by large earth-moving equipment which removed them completely within the course of an hour. Already badly damaged by the first swath cut by the excavating equipment, none of the burials were salvaged. No grave goods were noted, and all of the burials appeared to be flexed or semi-flexed.

The single burial retrieved from the Hobson Site was discovered in the midden area, about ten yards from the river bank. It lay from 6 to 12 inches below the surface but did not extend into the yellow subsoil; there was no noticeable grave outline. The burial was semiflexed, with legs folded, right arm at the side, and left forearm placed on the abdomen. The patellae, distal ends of the femora, and proximal ends of the tibiae had been removed by plowing, but the rest of the burial was in good condition. Although no grave goods accompanied the burial, the individual is unusual in showing abundant evidence that he had been either murdered or executed. The first and third lumbar vertebrae contain triangular projectile points which are lodged in the ventral portion of the centra and must therefore have penetrated the abdomen. Two addi-

tional flint projectile points were found, one in the chest cavity and the other touching the medial edge of the right scapula. Finally, there was an antler projectile point located in the chest cavity.

Skeletal measurements are presented in table 1. It should be noted that the skull was somewhat distorted by warping, so that some of the measurements are only approximate at best. The individual was male and, based on the dentition and features of the pubic symphysis, 22 to 23 years of age. Dental caries had begun to develop only on the upper right second molar, the upper first molars, and the lower molars; even here decay was confined to small "pinhole" perforations, the largest measuring .9 mm in diameter. The mandibular molar cusp pattern is of the Y-5 type only on the first molar; that of the second is of the +5 type. Excessive crowding of the incisors and canines had produced moderate malocclusion. The presence of Wormian bones may also be noted, as well as the presence of an olecranon perforation in the left humerus. A very interesting pathological condition of the skeleton is the ankylosis of a portion of the vertebral column, all nine vertebrae from the second cervical to the third thoracic being fused. When compared with the skeletal data available from the Madisonville Site (Hooten, 1922, p. 83-134), three differences are noted: the basion-bregma length is greater than that found in nearly all of the Madisonville crania, the angle of the mandible is smaller than that of any of the Madisonville mandibles, and the nasal index is slightly lower than any of those given for the Madisonville skeletons. It is unfortunate that none of the other burials were recovered, but if the measurements of a single skeleton can be given any weight, it is likely that the inhabitants of the Hobson Site were physically distinct from the Madisonville people.

VERTEBRATE FAUNA

A list of the species identified in the bone refuse is given in table 2 and requires little comment. Butchering marks were noted on 29 deer bones: 7 astragali, 8 humeri, 4 ulnae, 2 scapulae, 2 radii, 5 calcanea, and 1 femur. The cuts on the humeri were more proximal than the similar marks described by Guilday *et al.* (1962, p. 73 fig. 8) from the Eschelman Site and were generally located on the shaft or the very base of the shaft. One of the right calcanea is unusual in having cut marks on the anteroproximal surface of the bone. The femur has two cut marks on the lateral surface of the

great trochanter. The wolf ulna has a sharp cut on the posterolateral surface of the olecranon, at the top of the semilunar notch.

Measurements of the 17 measured deer astragali, in millimeters, are as follows:

	Length	Width	Thickness
Mean	39.8	25.9	22.6
Range	35.4–42.6	24.5–27.8	21.0–24.1

These measurements are significantly lower than those from the Eschelman Site, but the explanation probably lies in there being a greater proportion of does and young animals at the site rather than the presence of a subspecies characterized by its small size. The 12 deer jaws that could be age-graded form a uniform series ranging from about 8 months to 6 years of age, seven of the specimens falling within the 3 to 4 year age bracket.

Naiad Material

As mentioned in the description of the site, freshwater clam shells were so abundant in portions of the site that the term shell midden was applicable to those areas. The list of species is given in table 3. Noteworthy is the presence of *Quadrula metanevra* var. *wardi,* considered a small river and creek form, which might suggest that the shellfish were collected from both the Ohio River and its tributary, Storys Run. Ortmann (1919, p. 49-50), however, notes occurrences of this form as far down the Ohio River as Parkersburg. The present occurrence would merely extend the distribution slightly farther downstream. Comparison with faunal lists from the Childers, Globe Hill, and East Steubenville sites, 150 miles upstream, reveals relatively few differences. The complete absence of *Cyclonaias* and *Ptychobranchus* in such a relatively large sample is difficult to explain, but the only other differences are a comparatively greater percentage of *Elliptio crassidens* and *Quadrula cylindrica* at the Hobson Site.

CONCLUSIONS

The Hobson Site has yielded slight evidence of occupation during Archaic, Late Woodland, and late Late Prehistoric times. The major occupation occurred during middle Late Prehistoric times, during the Feurt Phase, and probably rather early in that phase. The only Feurt component having yielded an acceptable radio-

carbon date is the McCune Site at Athens, Ohio (Murphy, *ms.*) which yielded a date of 1235 A.D. The 1180 A.D. date for the Graham Site, a Baum component at Logan, Hocking County, Ohio, would seemingly pinpoint the date of the Hobson Site as very close to 1200 A.D. If importance is attached to the similarity between the Hobson ware and as yet undescribed pottery from the Blain Site, the date might be estimated as closer to 1100 A.D., for the Blain Site itself dates around 1000 A.D. (O. H. Prufer, personal communication, June, 1967). Affinities can also be seen with the Speidel Site, which has been referred to the Monongahela Complex. Although apparently close to the historic Kiskiminetas Town, it is unlikely that the Hobson Site is the exact location of that settlement.

It is regrettable that the Hobson Site could not have been excavated with the care and thoroughness it deserved. The material salvaged from the construction site provides a glimpse of what might be expected from a site transitional from the Baum to the Feurt Phase. Griffin (1943, p. 209) speaks of the region between the Madisonville and Feurt sites as "terra incognita," and the same might be said for that portion along the Ohio River between Proctorville and Marietta. If the Hobson Site is typical, this region must contain numerous rich and important sites as yet untouched though rapidly being destroyed.

TABLE 1

Skeletal Measurements and Indices

(Measurements in millimeters)

Cranial Measurements

a Glabello-occipital length	183	l Nasal breadth	24
b Maximum breadth	136	m Orbital height—left	37
c Basion-bregma height	147	n Orbital breadth—left	41
d Mean thickness left parietal	4.4	r Interorbital breadth	18
e Minimum frontal diameter	91	s Biorbital breadth	101
c′ Auricular height	121	t External palate length	54
Horizontal circumference	507	u External palate width	67
Nasion-opisthion arc	355	v Condylo-symphyseal length	105
Transverse arc	323	w Bicondylar width	128
f Bizygomatic diameter (Midfacial breadth)	124	x Height of symphysis	38
g Total facial height	128	mh Mandibular height	58
h Nasion-prosthion height	73	y Bigonial diameter	110
i Basion-nasion length	110	Minimum breadth of left ascending ramus	37
j Basion-prosthion length	96	Mean angle of mandible	113°
k Nasal height	55		

Cranial Indices

b/a Cranial index	74.2	y/e Fronto-gonial index	121
c/a Length/height	80.3	e/f Zygo-frontal index	73
c/b Breadth/height	108	m/n Left orbital index	90.2
$\frac{a+b+c}{3}$ Cranial module	155.3	r/s Interorbital index	17.8
e/b Fronto-parietal index	66.9	l/k Nasal index	43.6
g/f Total facial index	81.8	u/t External palatal index	125
h/f Upper facial index	50	v/w Mandibular index (1)	82
f/b Cranio-facial index	91.2	mh/v Mandibular index (2)	55.2
y/f Zygo-gonial index	81.5		

Postcranial Measurements

	Left	Right		Left	Right
Humerus			Femur (cont.)		
Maximum length	320	340	Middle anteropost. diam.	27.5	26.2
Maximum diameter of head	---	48	Middle lateral diam.	25.7	25.7
Maximum middle diameter	21.3	21.8	Middle circum.	86	87
Minimum middle diameter	15.1	15.5	Tibia		
Middle circum.	62	64	Maximum length	---	360
Ulna			Nutrient foramen anteropost. diam.	40	39
Maximum length	---	266	Nutrient foramen lateral diam.	22.7	21
Middle circum.	43	41	Middle anteropost. diam.	34	35.2
Radius			Middle lateral diam.	19.9	20.2
Maximum length	251	---	Middle circum.	87	90
Middle circum.	36	37	Clavicle		
Femur			Maximum length	153	149
Maximum length	---	---	Middle circum.	31	30
Maximum diameter of head	44.3	45.7	Innominate		
Subtrochanter anteropost. diam.	31.6	34.4	Height	---	212
Subtrochanter lat. diam.	25.8	26.4	Breadth	147	146

Postcranial Indices

Humerus			Fibula		
Middle index	70.9	71.1	Robustness index	12.4	---
Robustness index	19.4	19.2	Tibia		
Ulna			Platycnemic index	56.8	53.8
Robustness index	---	15.5	Middle index	58.9	57.4
Radius			Robustness index	---	25
Robustness index	14.3	---	Clavicle		
Femur			Robustness index	20	20
Platymeric index	78.8	76.7	Innominate		
Middle index	93.4	98.1	Innominate index	---	68.9

TABLE 2

VERTEBRATE REMAINS FROM THE HOBSON SITE

Species	*No. of bones*	*Percentage*
Fishes:		
Catastomid sp.	2	
Aplodinotus grunniens Rafinesque	1	
Ictalurus sp.	3	
Unidentified	9	
Reptiles:		
Terrapene carolina (Linnaeus)	27	4.3
Chelydra serpentina Linnaeus	6	
Birds:		
Meleagris gallopavo Linnaeus	95	15.3
Unidentified	11	
Mammals:		
Odocoileus virginianus (Zimmermann)	429	69.0
Procyon lotor (Linnaeus)	18	2.9
Sciurus sp.	9	1.4
Cervus canadensis Erxleben	9	1.4
Castor canadensis Kuhl	4	
Tamias striatus (Linnaeus)	3	
Sylvilagus floridanus (Allen)	2	
Ursus americanus Pallas	2	
Canis lupus Linnaeus	1	
Unidentified large mammal bones (probably deer)	122	
Unidentified mammal bones	408	
Total number of identified bones	611	

TABLE 3

MOLLUSCAN REMAINS FROM THE HOBSON SITE

Species	*Minimum No.**	*Percentage*
Pelecypoda:		
Amblema plicata (Say)	10	5.0
Quadrula cylindrica (Say)	18	9.0
Q. metanevra wardi (Lea)	9	4.5
Q. pustulosa (Lea)	2	
Pleurobema cordatum (Rafinesque)	69	34.5
P. pyramidatum (Lea)	3	
P. clava (Lamarck)	7	3.5
Elliptio dilatatus (Rafinesque)	3	
E. crassidens (Lamarck)	67	33.5
Obovaria subrotunda (Rafinesque)	2	
Proptera alata (Say)	1	
Ligumia recta latissima (Rafinesque)	3	
Lampsilis ovata (Say)	5	
L. siliquoidea (Barnes)	1	
	200	

* The minimum number of individuals, based upon the maximum number of either left or right valves of each species.

Gastropoda:

Anguispira alternata (Say)	45
A. kochi (Pfeiffer)	21
Mesodon clausus (Say)	7
Triodopsis tridentata (Say)	1
	74

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EXPLANATION OF PLATES

Plate

1. Stone and flint artifacts. Bottom row: Triangular points and two flake knives. Second row: Triangular points. Third row: Side-notched, stemmed, and corner-notched points; two triangular blanks. Top row: Small hematite celt, two large flint scrapers or choppers, and a crude triangular point.

2. Bone artifacts and historic material. Bottom row: Penknife and unidentifiable fragment of cast iron; bird bone bead. Top row: Deer ulna awl, bird bone bead, spatulate bone object, antler point, and two bird bone awls.

3. Pottery. Bottom row: Incised and plain lips on rim sherds of Feurt Plain. Note absence of flare on both sherds. Second row: Castellated, punctate strap handle (Feurt) and everted rim sherd (Madisonville?). Top row: Two Feurt strap handles, both with punctate borders, one with punctate handle and castellations, the other with plain handle and raised rim area.

4. Pottery. Bottom row: Unusual incised sherd with basal punctations (photographed obliquely to show decoration), punctate and cordmarked body sherds. Middle row: Horizontal and diagonally incised sherds, Feurt Incised (?). Top row: Watson Ware limestone-tempered, cordmarked rim; plain convex, shell-tempered rim, and unique shell-tempered, cordmarked rim with brushed and incised motif.

5. Single excavated burial: arrows show two associated triangular flint points and location of two other associated points.

6. Four lumbar and one thoracic vertebrae with imbedded triangular flint points.